

week he leaves his office at about eight o'clock in the evening. He never gets home until two in the morning. A fellow who does that regularly is up to something, isn't he?"

"As what, now?" challenged Dave.

"Well, carousing around. This is his night for going on one of his mysterious excursions. I watched him the last time."

"Where did he go?"

"Don't know. I started to follow him. He either suspected me and slipped me, or I lost him in the crowd. I know this, though—he was headed for the seamy side of the city."

"That isn't very definite," observed Dave. "I don't want to make any mistake."

"There won't be any," insisted Mart. "Are you nerved for a demonstration?"

"Of what?"

"A running down of our suspicions. See here, Tilden is keen as they make them. If he suspects that he is being followed, he is clever enough to lead a false chase. Let us be on hand to-night to take up the trail when he leaves his office."

"I'm agreeable, provided we can do it. I don't want to blunder myself into a laughing stock."

"Say," advanced Mart with spirit; "I've arranged a great plan. We'll disguise ourselves."

"How?" question Dave, dubiously.

It took a long time for Mart to induce his companion to join forces with him. His plan was a simple one. They were to blacken their hands and faces.

"We'll pass in the crowd and in the dark as negroes," explained Mart. "Oh, don't be so squeamish. If nothing comes of it, we'll get an idea of local color in our ramblings, anyhow."

At length Dave agreed to the proposition. When at about eight o'clock that evening the young lawyer, Ralph Tilden, left his office, where he had been at work writing

and studying, he had no idea that two persons strolling after him were bent on tracing his movements.

"See how he has pulled his coat collar up to hide his face," whispered Mart, as Tilden turned into the next street.

"Oh, that is quite natural," responded Dave. "It's beginning to drizzle, and he wants to shut the rain out."

The drizzle changed into a dreary pelting rain in a short time. Dave was glad when at last Tilden reached a two-story building on one of the lower strata streets of the city. On either side of the center open entrance were saloons. A part of the upper floor was lighted up, but the window shades were drawn trim and tight.

"Do you see?" said Mart, exultingly, grasping the arm of his companion. "What did I tell you?"

"Why, what do you mean?" inquired Dave, staring blankly.

"That place—downstairs saloons, upstairs the most notorious gambling house in the city."

"How do you know it?" submitted Dave pointedly.

"Why—er—that is, I heard someone told me," explained Mart stumbly.

In his excitement the speaker wiped his face with his handkerchief. Dave brushed the rain drops from his. They crossed the street and stood in the full glare of the strong electric arc lamp, discussing what they would do next. Some people passing by stared strangely. Then a policeman came up, regarded them with a suspicious glare, and caught each by the collar.

"Ah!" he remarked—"disguising yourselves, eh? You'll explain this to the sergeant, my hearties."

Remonstrances were in vain. A hooting crowd followed the two seekers after "local color" clear to the station. No wonder! Where the rain had trickled and their careless hands had wandered, the faces of the un-